

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2012 Yukon River Summer Salmon Fishery News Release #85

Summer Update #9, Districts 1-6

Districts Affected: Yukon Area

Assessment Projects

Andreafsky River weir/USFWS

The cumulative passage through July 31 is approximately 2,500 Chinook which is below the average of 4,000 for this date. The cumulative passage for summer chum is approximately 56,700 which is above the median of 46,500 for this date.

Pilot Station sonar project/ADF&G

Chinook salmon passage at Pilot Station sonar is estimated to be approximately 107,000 through August 5, which is below the historical average of 148,100 for this date. It is also below the average of 133,300 for historical late years for this date. Summer chum salmon passage is estimated to be approximately 2.1 million which is above the historical median of 1.4 million.

Gisasa River weir/USFWS

The cumulative passage through July 30 is approximately 1,300 Chinook which is below the average of 4,000 for this date. The cumulative passage for summer chum is approximately 83,400 which is well above the historical median of 37,300 for this date.

Henshaw Creek Weir/TCC

The cumulative passage through August 3 is approximately 922 Chinook which is below the average of 1,000 for this date. The cumulative passage for summer chum is approximately 290,800 which is well above the median of 81,300 for this date.

Rapids Video Test Fish Wheel/Zuray

The cumulative expanded count through August 5 is approximately 3,500 Chinook which is above the average of 2,200 for this date. The cumulative expanded count for summer chum is approximately 2,700 which is above the median of 1,100 for this date.

Eagle Sonar/ADF&G

The cumulative Chinook salmon passage at Eagle sonar is estimated to be approximately 28,100 through August 5, which is below the average of 51,300 for this date.

Chena River Tower/ADF&G

The cumulative count for Chinook salmon through August 5 is 1,600 which is below the average of 6,700 for this date. The cumulative count for summer chum salmon is 7,700 which is above the median of 6,700 for this date.

Salcha River Tower/BSFA

The cumulative count for Chinook salmon through August 5 is 6,900 which is below the average of 11,700 for this date. The cumulative count for summer chum salmon is 15,900 summer which is below the median of 19,900 for this date.

Assessment

The 2012 Chinook salmon run is winding down. Based on the assessment information to date, the Chinook salmon run appears to have come in at the lower end of the preseason outlook estimate of 109,000. The 2012 preseason outlook was for a run size of 109,000 to 146,000.

The Eagle sonar cumulative passage estimate of approximately 28,100 Chinook salmon through August 5 is well below the historical average of 51,300 for this date. Comparing historical run timing at Eagle sonar and the 2012 run timing at Pilot Station and Rapids Test Fish Wheel, the first quarter point at Eagle sonar was approximately July 24 through July 25. These dates are preliminary until the project is completed. The preliminary projection at Eagle sonar for Chinook salmon passage is approximately 34,000 to 42,000. A passage of this size would be below the Interim Management Escapement Goal of 42,500 to 55,000 adopted by the joint US-Canada Yukon River Panel and would not provide for Canadian harvest share levels specified in the Treaty Agreement.

Conservative management actions are still being taken in the middle and upper portions of Subdistrict 5-D in an effort to pass more Chinook salmon across the border for escapement.

Currently, several escapement monitoring projects for Chinook salmon (Andreafsky River weir, Gisasa River weir, Henshaw Creek weir, Chena River tower, Salcha River tower) have estimated passages well below the historical average passage estimates for this date. Despite these low passage estimates, the escapement goal of 2,100 – 4,900 has been achieved at E. F. Andreafsky River with a total estimated passage of 2,516 Chinook salmon through July 31. The escapement goal of 3,300 – 6,500 for Salcha River has also been achieved with a total estimated passage of 6,888 Chinook salmon through August 5. The department started flying aerial surveys last week. The results of these surveys will be made available in the summer season summary.

The escapement goal of >40,000 summer chum salmon has been achieved at E.F. Andreafsky River with approximately 56,673 summer chum salmon passage through July 31. The Anvik River escapement goal of 350,000 – 700,000 summer chum salmon has also been achieved with 483,506 estimated passage through July 26. Preliminary estimates suggest the 2012 summer chum run was at the upper end of the preseason outlook estimate of 1.5-2.0 million.

Current Management

Conservation measures have been discontinued in Districts 1-4, Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C, and District 6. Based on run timing, restrictive measures are being continued in the middle and upper portions of Subdistricts 5-D in order to conserve Chinook salmon for escapement.

The current subsistence fishing schedules are as follows:

Coastal District: The Coastal District is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller

Districts 1, 2, 3: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day except for 12 hours before, during, and 12 hours after each commercial fishing period. Fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

The Innoko River: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistrict 4-A (from ¾ miles downstream of Old Paradise Village upstream to Cone Point): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Anvik, Grayling, Kaltag, Nulato, and Koyukuk. Subsistence salmon fishing in Subdistrict 4-A is currently open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. Use of drift gillnets to harvest fall chum salmon is allowed in that portion of Subdistrict 4-A from Stink Creek upstream to Cone Point during open subsistence fishing periods.

Subdistricts 4-B and 4-C (from Cone Point to Illinois Creek): This area includes the mainstem Yukon River communities of Galena and Ruby. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Sundays to 6:00 p.m. Fridays.

In District 4, fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller during open subsistence salmon fishing periods.

Koyukuk River: Subsistence salmon fishing in the Koyukuk River is open 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and fishermen may use gillnets with a mesh size of 7.5 inches or smaller.

Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C: Subsistence salmon fishing is open 5 days per week from 6:00 p.m. Tuesdays until 6:00 p.m. Sundays.

In an effort to protect Chinook salmon as they pass through this long section of river, Subdistrict 5-D has been divided into three separate areas.

Subdistricts 5-D-Lower (from an ADF&G regulatory marker 2 miles downstream of Waldron Creek upstream to the Hadweenzic River and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Stevens Village and Beaver. Subsistence salmon fishing is open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day.

Subdistricts 5-D-Middle (from the Hadweenzic River to the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the community of Fort Yukon. Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and will remain closed until further notice.

Subdistrict 5-D-Upper (from the upstream mouth of 22 Mile Slough to the U.S./Canada border and including all adjacent tributaries): This area includes the communities of Circle, and Eagle. Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and will remain closed until further notice.

The department will notify fishermen by August 9 concerning the subsistence salmon fishing schedule for each portion of Subdistrict 5-D.

Subdistricts 6-A and 6-B (from the mouth of the Tanana River upstream to the downstream mouth of Wood River): This area includes the communities of Manley, Minto, and Nenana. Subsistence salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 pm Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 pm Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays. In the Old Minto Area, subsistence fishing for salmon is open for one five day fishing period per week from 6:00pm Fridays until 6:00pm Wednesdays.

Subdistricts 6-C (from the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the downstream mouth of the Salcha River): This area includes the communities of Fairbanks, North Pole, and Salcha. Personal use salmon fishing is open for two 42-hour periods per week from 6:00 pm Fridays until 12:00 noon Sundays and from 6:00 pm Mondays until 12:00 noon Wednesdays.

During subsistence salmon fishing closures, fish wheels may not be operated and gillnets with a mesh size greater than four inches and a length greater than 60 feet must be removed from the water.

Commercial Fishing

The summer season commercial fishery is over in Districts 1, 2, and Subdistrict 4-A.

Preliminary harvest information for Districts 1 and 2

Ten commercial fishing periods occurred in District 1 and six commercial fishing periods occurred in District 2. The preliminary cumulative commercial harvest for Districts 1 and 2 combined is approximately 206,000 summer chum salmon, and 2,400 Chinook salmon have been reported as caught but not sold.

Preliminary harvest information for Subdistrict 4-A

Thirteen commercial fishing periods occurred in Subdistrict 4-A. The preliminary cumulative

commercial harvest for Subdistrict 4-A through July 30 is approximately 108,220 summer chum salmon. A total of 59 Chinook salmon have been caught and released in the fishery to date.

Preliminary harvest information for District 6

Four commercial fishing periods have occurred in District 6. The cumulative preliminary harvest in District 6 through August 6 is approximately 2,294 summer chum salmon.

Period #5: 6:00 p.m. Monday, August 6, until 12:00 noon Wednesday, August 8

Fishermen will be notified by August 9 regarding additional commercial fishing periods.

Recorded fishery announcements and updates will be available 24 hours a day at 949-1731 or 1-866-479-7387. If you have any questions regarding this report, please call the Fairbanks ADF&G office at (907) 459-7274.

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